

July 1, 2014

# Attendance Center Performance Ranking Legislative Report



Iowa Department of Education



## **Iowa Department of Education**

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## Table of Contents

Background.....	3
Project Team Membership .....	4
Legislation.....	5
2013-14 Meeting Schedule .....	6
Executive Summary .....	7
Recommendations of the Department.....	8
Student Proficiency .....	10
Student Academic Growth .....	11
Graduation Rates.....	13
Attendance Rates .....	14
Parent Involvement, Engagement and Satisfaction .....	15
Employee Turnover.....	17
Community Activities and Involvement.....	18
Closing Gap Score.....	19
College-Readiness Rates .....	22
Additional Optional Indicators.....	23
Timeline .....	24
Conclusion .....	25
References .....	26
Appendix A: ACR Indicators.....	27
Appendix B: Parent Involvement Survey .....	29

## Background

The Attendance Center Ranking (ACR) requirements were established by House File (HF) 215 of the 2013 legislative session. Section 73 of HF 215 required the Iowa Department of Education to develop a school performance system and report card for all attendance centers. The goal of this legislation is to establish specific performance goals and evaluate the effectiveness of each attendance center toward meeting these outcomes.

In order to complete this project, a work group and a vetting team were established within the Department. This team included a cross section of approximately 20 employees within the Department, representing multiple bureaus and roles. Representatives included School Improvement, Equity, Special Education, Title I, Standards and Curriculum, Early Childhood and Information and Analysis Services. The purpose of the work team was to delve into the detail of the legislation and provide recommendations for measuring each metric. Further, the team needed to provide a recommendation on how to bring these multiple measures together in an overall rating system. The vetting team was provided periodic updates of the work and offered important feedback and suggestions to the work team.

The ACR legislation includes a series of education metrics which must be measured in a system that ranks all attendance centers in Iowa. The ACR system needs to cover the approximately 1,300 attendance centers in Iowa representing a wide variety of configurations from early childhood centers to high schools. Therefore, for these metrics and ratings to be effective, it is important to examine multiple measures which are able to represent the variety of schools across Iowa.

The following report contains the original recommendations of the Department. Also included in the report are the plans to develop and deploy the ACR system. A key element to the success will be the ability to integrate the ACR system with the Continuous Improvement Process and Tiered Accreditation and Support. The goal is to measure and pinpoint potential problem areas that would allow districts and schools to implement changes using a continuous improvement process to ameliorate target areas. The Department was required to submit its recommendations in a final report to the general assembly by July 1, 2014.

## Project Team Membership

### Work Group

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## **Legislation - Sec. 73. ATTENDANCE CENTER PERFORMANCE RANKINGS - PERFORMANCE INDEX.**

1. The department of education shall develop criteria and a process for school districts to use to establish specific performance goals and to evaluate the performance of each attendance center operated by the district in order to arrive at an overall school performance grade and report card for each attendance center. This information must be posted on the department of education's internet site with information for each attendance center listed separately. The criteria shall include but not be limited to student academic growth, parent involvement, student attendance, employee turnover, and community activities and involvement.

2. The department shall develop an achievement score that calculates aggregate growth as well as aggregate proficiency of students which when combined with other academic indicators results in an overall school performance grade for each attendance center in the school district. The performance grade may also be used as one measure to rank and classify schools into six different performance categories: exceptional, high performing, commendable, acceptable, needs improvement, and priority. The categories may be used to define support and specialized assistance to schools classified as needs improvement or priority as well as to recognize schools designated exceptional or high performing. Additionally, a closing gap score shall be calculated as another measure to determine subgroup performance and to rank and classify attendance centers. Other academic indicators shall be defined as criterion referenced variables that will be utilized in the calculation of the performance grade. Other academic indicators shall include but not be limited to graduation rates, attendance rates, and college-readiness rates. Additional indicators of academic success and progress may include post-graduation data, suspension and expulsion rates, levels of student engagement, parent satisfaction, parent engagement, and staff working conditions.

3. The department shall submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the state board of education, the governor, and the general assembly by July 1, 2014.

## 2013-14 Meeting Schedule

Team	Meeting Dates
Work Group	June 13, 2013 July 11, 2013 July 25, 2013 August 21, 2013 September 3, 2013 October 4, 2013 October 29, 2013 November 12, 2013 December 3, 2013 December 10, 2013 December 17, 2013 December 19, 2013 January 9, 2014 January 28, 2014 February 11, 2014 February 18, 2014 February 24, 2014 March 4, 2014 March 12, 2014 March 27, 2014 March 31, 2014 April 15, 2014 May 1, 2014 May 6, 2014 May 13, 2014 May 14, 2014 May 27, 2014 May 28, 2014 June 5, 2014
Vetting Team	June 13, 2013 July 11, 2013 July 25, 2013 August 21, 2013 September 3, 2013 October 4, 2013 December 19, 2013 May 13, 2014 May 28, 2014

## Executive Summary

Many states have passed laws requiring the implementation of school-level grading systems. These types of rating systems have been controversial and highly politicized. On one side of the issue, advocacy groups cite transparency and public need for this information as a rationale for the demand for state-level ranking systems. On the other side, opponents of ranking systems fear these systems incorrectly classify schools and foster a milieu of shame and blame for teachers and administrators.

Both groups have legitimate concerns that need to be considered and addressed in the creation of an ACR system. To that end, the Department has been working to build a system that can bridge the gap between these differing points of view. For an Iowa ACR to be successful, it must thread the needle and provide information about Iowa schools that is transparent. At the same time, data must be used to improve and support schools that are struggling. A key element to this success is using the ACR data within the school improvement process.

There is no evidence that proves ACR systems, as a standalone education reform initiative, are effective. To make a ranking system useful, it must include professional development on the effective use of the data, along with supports and technical assistance in a school's area of need. The goal of an ACR system should be to build a process whereby schools have a clear means to drive toward improvement, which in turn increases student outcomes.

The Department intends to build the ACR system as an integral component to its redesign of the existing school improvement and accreditation process. The end result will be a differentiated accountability and school improvement process in which the Department will use metrics from the ACR system to identify districts whose data indicate that a school improvement visit is needed and to determine the frequency and intensity of support required. Next, the Department will use these data to target specific areas for improvement in working with districts and schools. Districts and schools will also use the ACR system to review their own data and build it into their annual progress reports and school improvement plans as part of their continuous improvement process. In short, a data system with a set of reports that rank all Iowa schools will not, on its own, lead to an increase in student achievement. Rather, it is how these data are used locally by district and school leaders to improve practices within classrooms that will lead to meaningful change.

## Recommendations of the Department

The Department has several general recommendations for the Attendance Center Ranking system for Iowa schools.

- 1) An ACR system must be built on a framework that combines accountability and improvement to be successful. Each year, schools and districts across Iowa use accountability metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and practices. The results of these measures can highlight areas of success as well as pinpoint opportunities where improvement must be made. This annual process should be embedded in district and building planning. While local planning processes have existed for several years, they have not necessarily been data-based, and it is clear that they need to be revised to focus on increasing student achievement. The ACR legislation provides an opportunity for the Department, Iowa Area Education Agencies (AEAs), districts and buildings to collectively align accountability metrics within a focused improvement framework. In turn, ACR metrics will be built into annual progress reports and accountability plans to monitor progress and inform the supports the Department can provide.
- 2) Transparency and simplicity are key elements to an ACR system. The term “transparency” has multiple meanings in relation to an ACR system. An often-cited reason for creating statewide ACR systems is to provide information about the status of schools in comparison to others. This system will provide a “one-stop” location for important education metrics included in the ACR system. Reports must be easily understood and accessible to stakeholders, both inside and outside of the education community. These data must be public in nature but also provide sufficient detail to be actionable by districts and schools. Further, the manner in which school rankings are calculated must be easily understood by a wide variety of education stakeholders. The Department will minimize the use of complex statistical calculations that cannot be replicated and will provide detailed information to help stakeholders understand the ACR data.
- 3) An Iowa ACR system needs to include both technical assistance and support if districts and schools are to use the data to drive improvement and increase student outcomes. An ACR system will differentiate schools across Iowa and will highlight exemplary buildings but also draw attention to those that are struggling. Best practices can be learned from buildings that are performing at high levels across multiple measures. At the same time, buildings that are struggling will have data available to focus their efforts. The education system will also use the data to focus and determine where supports are needed. HF 215 included sections to enact both a statewide ACR system and to provide additional state supplemental assistance for high-need schools. The intent behind the high-needs school supplement was to provide additional funding for schools in Iowa that were identified as high need by the Department. While the high-needs school section of HF 215 was not funded, the Department recommends if funding were to be allocated for

these purposes, the criterion that determines schools in need will leverage the ACR system.

- 4) For an ACR system to be effective, it needs to be built collaboratively, involving both AEAs and school districts in the process. An ACR system should not be built in isolation but instead should include feedback from multiple levels of the education system. AEAs provide technical support teams for districts and often provide direct services to schools. Districts can also provide valuable insight into needed supports. Further, district personnel must be involved in piloting and providing suggestions to improve the ACR system. These are essential components to any large-scale implementation.
- 5) A critical next step in the development of an ACR is to build consensus around an agreed-upon method for combining the results of each individual metric into an overall score and ranking. The Department did not include this information in this report because it felt it should involve external partners in this process. To this end, the Department plans to engage a team of stakeholders from the Department, AEAs, and school districts to develop the methodology for classifying and ranking schools.

The following sections of this report provide a summary of each metric to be included in an Iowa ACR. Each segment includes a brief description of the metric, data available to calculate the measure, information about alternate methods for calculation, recommendation for calculating and any cautions that might exist.

A top priority in the development of an ACR is the need to provide a clear picture of student achievement across Iowa. Stakeholders both inside and outside of the education system should have access to key ACR metrics as early as possible. It is important to build the ACR system and reports into the redesign of the tiered accreditation and school improvement process. However, this process will take time to build, test, pilot and deploy statewide. Access to information cannot wait until the system is fully implemented before it is made available; accordingly, the Department will release the growth and proficiency components of the system on an earlier timeline so stakeholders can begin to examine school performance.

A risk to the success of an ACR will be the tension between transparency and utility of these key metrics. There is a public interest to receive access to these metrics as early as possible. At the same time, districts need time to plan and additional resources to carry forward meaningful change. The last section of the report provides a timeline for the implementation of an ACR system.

## Student Proficiency

Iowa uses the Iowa Assessments as the accountability measure for the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. While NCLB as a federal education policy has shown mixed results, it did lead to a universal set of required assessments for all schools and districts across Iowa. This set of information can serve as a comparison for schools and districts as they consider and implement improvement efforts to increase the success of their students. It can also inform stakeholders and the public about the progress of students and schools on indicators of student achievement.

Iowa Assessments are standardized achievement tests developed by Iowa Testing Programs (ITP) at The University of Iowa. They are available for use nationally in grades K-12. The Iowa Assessment results yield different scores: raw scores, national standard scores (a.k.a. scaled scores), grade equivalents, and percentile ranks (national and Iowa norms). The standard score scale is used to build three achievement levels: non-proficient, proficient, and advanced. These levels have been established for content areas of reading (comprehension), mathematics, and science.

Proficiency rates reflect the percent of students scoring at the proficiency cut point for reading, mathematics, and science, calculated independently, and reported at the school, district, and state levels. The ACR work group proposes to use the same calculations for the student proficiency indicator for the Attendance Center Ranking system that currently is reported by the Department for NCLB. This calculation is used in the *State Report Card for No Child Left Behind* and is used to determine whether or not schools and districts are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward all students being proficient by the 2013-2014 school year.

## Student Academic Growth

Academic growth is a popular concept, with many different definitions and calculations, some of which are exceedingly complicated. The ACR work and vetting groups expressed a desire to use a method that was transparent, could be calculated directly, and reflected an expectation of reasonable growth for all students. After reviewing multiple options, it was recommended that the ACR system growth indicator be based primarily on a post-secondary success target, which fits best with our vision for success for Iowa's students. For this indicator, an individual growth goal will be generated for each student based on his/her prior year National Standard Score and the amount of growth needed for the student to reach college/career ready (CCR) by grade 12. For students whose standard scores are already above the CCR cut, the trajectory and growth goal will be the annual increase in observed growth at the 50th percentile for the student's current grade.

For diagnostic purposes, reading and math may be reviewed separately. This indicator can be calculated with students in 4th grade and above, given that the first required year of testing is 3rd grade. The building summary will be the percent of students meeting their individual growth goals.

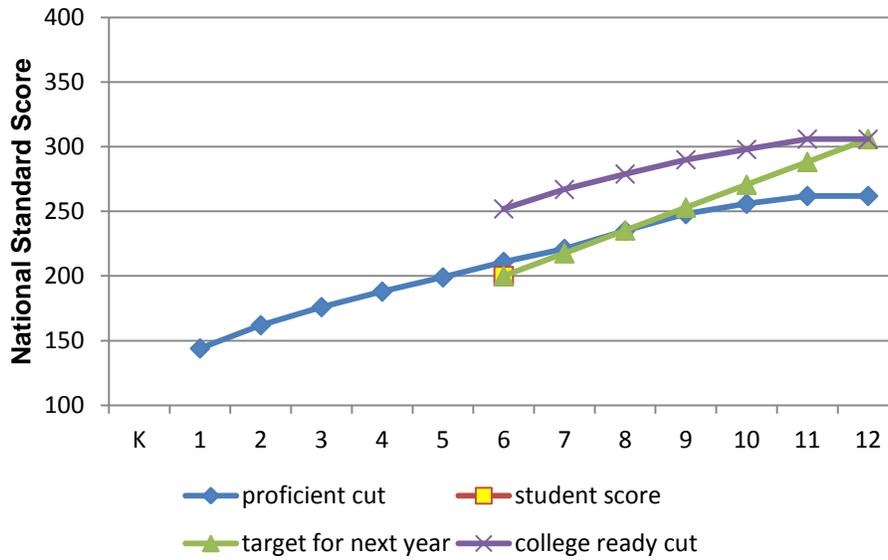
The ACR work group reviewed a variety of value-added models as well as normative growth models. Value-added models are highly complicated and often difficult to understand. Many value-added models require complex statistical algorithms to calculate and therefore cannot be easily replicated. Normative growth models either apply an average observed growth to all students, or apply different normative growth targets to groups of students performing at different levels of achievement. The average growth targets may present growth goals lower than observed growth for high-achieving students and differential growth targets based on normative growth may result in minimal, insufficient growth for low-achieving students. Additionally, growth targets based on current observed growth generally result in the expectation of growth similar to past growth, not growth that represents improvement over past performance.

In the end, the work group determined that the proposed model using the trajectory toward post-secondary success was rigorous, attainable, and meaningfully aligned with the State Board of Education's goal that "Individuals will pursue post-secondary education in order to drive economic success."

The below example demonstrates the CCR model for a student who scored a 200 on the mathematics assessment in 6th grade. The student would become proficient with a score of 236 in 8th grade. The student would reach the CCR cut of 306 in 12th grade.

Grade	Proficiency Cut	College Ready Cut	Student Score	Score Target	Growth Target
6	211	252	200		18
7	221	267	--	218	18
8	235	279	--	236	18
9	248	290	--	254	18
10	256	298	--	272	18
11	262	306	--	290	16
12	262	306	--	306	--

## 6th Grade Growth Model (CR)



## Graduation Rates

In October 2008, the U.S. Department of Education enacted regulations requiring all states to compute and report a four-year “on-time” graduation rate (34 C.F.R. §200.19). In Iowa, high school graduation rates are calculated using the individual student data collected through Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI). With this data system, which includes unique state student IDs, Iowa is able to track the same group of students over time and implement first-time freshman cohort graduation rates (students who repeat their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year are assigned to their original cohort). For the purposes of the ACR system, graduation rates would apply to schools that have a 12<sup>th</sup> grade. For example, the four-year cohort graduation rate is calculated for the class of 2012 by dividing the number of students in the cohort (denominator) who graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less by the number of first-time 9<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in the fall of 2008 minus the number of students who transferred out plus the total number of students who transferred in. The formula for this cohort calculation is listed below: Iowa Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate =  $(FG + TIG) / (F + TI - TO)$

For the graduating class of 2012:

- FG = First-time 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in fall of 2008 and graduated in 2012 or earlier
- TIG = Students who transferred in grades 9 to 12 and graduated in 2012 or earlier
- F = First-time 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in fall of 2008
- TI = Transferred in the first-time 9<sup>th</sup> graders’ cohort in grades 9 to 12
- TO = Transfer out (including immigrants and deceased)

First-time freshmen and transferred-in students include resident students attending a public school in the district; non-resident students open-enrolled in, whole-grade sharing in, or tuition in; and foreign students on visa. Those excluded are home-schooled and nonpublic school students; public school students enrolled in another district but taking courses on a part-time basis; and foreign exchange students. Students receiving regular diplomas are included as graduates in the numerator and early graduates are included in the original cohort. All students who take longer to graduate (including students with IEPs) are included in the denominator but not in the numerator for the four-year rate.

For the purposes of the Attendance Center Rankings, the ACR work group proposes to measure four-, five-, six-, and seven-year graduation rates using the highest of these four rates for the ranking, but reporting all four rates. It was decided that calculating different rates better represents the overall picture of graduation in the state. This may be especially important for small buildings in which a difference of one student significantly changes the graduation rate. When examining the differences between four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates, there was a notable increase in rates for those with IEPs, English Language Learners, Hispanics, and African Americans. In addition, the inclusion of seven-year graduation rates would allow us to account for all students, especially those who are on IEPs until they reach the age of 21. In order to calculate the five-, six-, and seven-year rates, the denominator remains the same as described above for calculating the four-year graduation rate. The differences would be in calculating the numerator for each year:

- Four-year rate’s numerator has 4<sup>th</sup> year graduates plus early year (1 to 3 year) graduates
- Five-year rate’s numerator has 5<sup>th</sup> year graduates plus early year (1 to 4 year) graduates
- Six-year rate’s numerator has 6<sup>th</sup> year graduates plus early year (1 to 5 year) graduates
- Seven-year rate’s numerator has 7<sup>th</sup> year graduates plus early year (1 to 6 year) graduates

## Attendance Rates

Attendance rates are also collected through Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI). The average daily attendance (ADA) rate for kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade is one of the additional academic indicators for the NCLB accountability system, and the ACR work group proposes to measure attendance rates in the same manner. Each student's daily attendance is tracked by his/her school, and the aggregate days of student attendance (days present) in a school or school district is reported to the Department. Similarly, each student's days enrolled is also tracked and reported. Attendance rates can then be calculated at the school and district level by summing all student days present and dividing by the sum of all student days enrolled.

Attendance rates would only apply to buildings with students in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the ACR system. Recent state legislation has provided districts the option to choose a calendar based on either 1,080 hours or the traditional 180 days. Although this creates two ways to calculate attendance, the Department is able to standardize the data and aggregate it appropriately for comparisons between schools that choose calendars based on either hours or days.

While attendance rates are important to examine to ensure the vast majority of students are attending school regularly, the percentage tends to be extremely high overall. Other measures, such as chronic absenteeism in early grades, have shown to be an early warning sign of later academic failure (Chang and Romero, 2008). Chronic absenteeism can be masked within overall attendance rates. This metric shows promise by targeting key groups of students to ensure they are present to learn and therefore on track for academic success. Chronic absenteeism as a measure will need to be examined in more detail throughout development and pilot phases of the ACR system.

## Parent Involvement, Engagement and Satisfaction

For purposes of the Attendance Center Ranking system, the following definitions have been applied to Parent Involvement, Parent Engagement, and Parent Satisfaction.

- *Parent Involvement:* The ways in which school staff report that they reach out to, involve, and partner with parents with regard to their children's education.
- *Parent Engagement:* The ways in which parents report that they are involved in and partner with the school to support their children's education.
- *Parent Satisfaction:* The level of satisfaction parents express in regard to their children's education, including, but not limited to, the parent involvement practices of the school.

While the Department regularly surveys the parents of students with special needs to gather information about education services, there currently is no measurement tool implemented to gather information about the level of involvement, engagement, and/or satisfaction of all parents of students in the education system. Without a measurement tool to assess this, the ACR work group consulted several resources, including:

- The U.S. Department of Education Family and Community Engagement Framework (<http://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf>);
- Iowa's Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) director and staff, who worked in Iowa to implement effective parent involvement policies, programs, and activities that led to improvements in student academic achievement and that strengthened partnerships among parents and staff to meet the education needs of children ([www.iowaparents.org](http://www.iowaparents.org)); and
- Surveys designed by national parent engagement experts, including Joyce Epstein, Kathleen Hoover-Dempsey, and Karen Mapp (additional survey instrument information can be found at <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/data-collection-instruments-for-evaluating-family-involvement>).

After reviewing the research, the work group determined that Parent Involvement data will be collected using a survey of school staff, and Parent Engagement and Parent Satisfaction information will be measured with a survey of parents. While other options were considered (e.g. percent of parents attending parent-teacher conferences or number of family activities sponsored by the school annually), research in this area shows that these indicators do not by themselves lead to increased student achievement.

In short, research shows that effective Parent Involvement/Parent Engagement involves a school culture where parents:

- Are viewed as important partners
- Feel welcome in the school building
- Understand the role they can play in their child's education
- Feel confident and competent in their ability to support their child's education
- Have the information and tools necessary to support their child's education

When these critical components of Parent Involvement/Parent Engagement are present, school-parent partnerships are most likely to have a positive impact on student achievement.

Using the resources listed above, the work group has developed a staff survey to assess the critical components of Parent Involvement. This survey was designed for teachers of students in grades K-12 and therefore this measurement will apply to all buildings. All schools will complete the Parent Involvement (staff) survey annually in the spring for inclusion in the overall Attendance Center Rankings.

In addition, a parent survey will be developed to measure the critical components of Parent Engagement, as well as ascertain information about Parent Satisfaction. This survey will also be designed for parents of students in all of grades K-12. For a variety of reasons, gathering information from the entire parent population or from a representative sample is difficult. As a result, requirements for completing the Parent Engagement/Satisfaction (parent) survey will be determined in conjunction with AEA and school district feedback. Possibilities may include the optional completion of this survey and/or the requirement of completing this survey when the Parent Involvement (staff) survey indicates high need.

Both the staff and parent surveys will be piloted and statistical analyses will be run on the data to finalize survey items (reliability and validity measures). Once items are finalized, calculations for a building score, as well as inclusion in the overall ACR system will be determined. The Parent Involvement (teacher) survey items and response options are listed in Appendix B.

## Employee Turnover

In the literature on turnover and retention, the general term “turnover” is used as an umbrella term to describe “the departure of teachers from their teaching jobs” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 500). We follow Ingersoll’s lead in defining turnover as the departure of certified staff members from a school. Staff turnover in schools is a major concern because of possible disruption in student learning and the demand it creates for replacement educators (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Kozleski, Mainzer, Deshler & Coleman, 2000; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, NCTAF, 2003). Schools seek to retain skilled and effective teachers who are engaged with the students and contribute to school improvement. However, caution is encouraged when reviewing turnover data because reducing turnover cannot be the goal when some teachers at a school are incompetent or disengaged. There are also financial costs that accompany teacher turnover, though approaches to calculating these costs vary widely (Ingersoll, 2001; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000).

Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005) completed a literature review focusing on the issue of teacher retention in U.S. public schools. Their research suggests that teacher decisions to remain in a school and in teaching are influenced by a combination of the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that they receive in their work. They found that teacher preparation programs, hiring practices, compensation, working conditions (facilities, equipment, and supplies, teaching assignments, curriculum, standards, and accountability), and school community (colleagues, school leaders, parents, and students) are all potential factors in the decision to stay or to leave a particular school or the profession as a whole.

The data that will be used to calculate staff turnover come from the Basic Educational Data Survey (BEDS) Staff Collection. To be included in the analysis, the staff member must hold an Iowa teaching or administrative license and be assigned to a school. All licensed professionals assigned to a school are included regardless of position. The ACR work group discussed whether all licensed positions should be included, or just classroom teachers. The decision was made that, due to influence on student learning, positions other than classroom teachers, such as administrators and counselors, should be included.

In the proposed ACR calculation, each staff person can contribute to the retention in one school only: his/her “primary school.” Full-time and part-time staff are both included. Teacher records will be matched across the years using their license (folder) numbers. Schools that have been designated as Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA) for three years are required to take corrective action. One action that can be taken is to replace the school staff that are relevant to the failure to make AYP. A few schools in Iowa have exercised this option and will not be included in the analysis. For schools exercising this option, the two-year average does not apply, the year the replacement option was exercised is set aside, and only one year of data is used.

Retention will then be calculated by dividing the number of staff members who were employed the previous year and are still working in the building during the current year by the total number of staff members in the building during the current year. Buildings with less than 10 staff members during the current year will not be included in the analysis. In order to reduce variation, a two-year average is then calculated for the most recent two years. If a school has a calculation for only the last year, that one year of data is used, such as for a new or newly reorganized school, to facilitate including as many schools as possible.

## Community Activities and Involvement

Another required ACR indicator, according to the legislation, is community activities and involvement. The ACR work group discussed possible options to measure community activities and involvement, including:

- Adding items to the parent or staff survey when measuring parent engagement
- Number of internship opportunities available for students
- School partnerships with local businesses and organizations
- Community and adult education program enrollment
- Communication to the general public (e.g. taxpayers)

After discussing the multiple ways that community activities and involvement could be measured, the work group had several concerns. Most importantly, there is little peer-reviewed research regarding community activities and involvement that are specifically related to student achievement or performance. The work team would like to include meaningful indicators in the ACR system with evidence to have a positive influence on student outcomes. Also, in partnership with the AEAs, the work group would like to have input on how support could be developed around this indicator.

As a result, the work team will continue to explore how to include a meaningful measure for community activities and involvement in the ACR system. Continued research and conversations with AEAs and school districts may produce a way of collecting and reporting on this indicator in the future.

## Closing Gap Score

Since the historic publication of The Coleman Report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, in 1966, schools have been working to close achievement gaps between middle-income, white students and racial, socioeconomic, and disability groups. The inclusion of a closing gap metric in an ACR system can highlight successes of Iowa schools in equalizing achievement between groups. At the same time, this metric will also emphasize areas of concern and pinpoint where additional supports are needed to raise achievement for groups of students who are underperforming compared to their peers.

The purpose of a closing gap score is to measure inequity in student outcomes. Differences in achievement outcomes have long been observed among various subgroup disaggregations, including poverty (free/reduced lunch or FRL), English Language Learners (ELL), students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP), as well as various ethnic/racial groups. The assumption is that the gaps are based more on differential experiences than differential ability and that reducing gaps is desirable and attainable. The ACR work group would like to propose the use of a gap index model that measures inequity by comparing the proportion of any subgroup in the population with the proportion of the same subgroup among those students who are proficient. In the absence of differential experiences, the proportions should be similar (i.e., there is nothing systematic that is keeping students in the subgroup from being successful).

For the purposes of the ACR system, it is recommended that a single subgroup of students is used consisting of students who are identified as having an IEP, receiving FRL, or being identified as ELL, as these groups tend to show the most disadvantage in student achievement. The calculated index uses the Iowa Assessments for grades 3-11 to compute an equity gap between the population proportion and the proficient proportion. Change in this gap score across two years will be used as the ranking variable. In other words, the index represents the school's relative ability to decrease its own gaps. Schools reducing gaps will fare better, and schools with increasing gaps will fare worse in rankings.

The ACR work group reviewed several other models when deciding upon its recommendation:

- Traditional Model - The traditional gap model consists of comparing the group achievement results of each perceived disadvantaged subgroup with the remaining students not in the subgroup (e.g., FRL vs. not FRL). Students are often represented in multiple subgroups (e.g., Hispanic, ELL and FRL), resulting in the low-achieving student being counted multiple times. This approach is further complicated by substantial variation in the prevalence of various subgroups across Iowa schools, both urban vs. rural, and large vs. small school settings. The number of viable subgroups, as well as the relative proportions within subgroups, varies dramatically, making an equitable single index unreasonable.

- 100% Proficiency Model - A gap model consisting of tracking growth of each subgroup toward 100% proficient was considered. This model monitored improvement in the percent proficient of each group. Because of the highly variable amount of subgroups, it was deemed inequitable across all schools. It also directly paralleled achievement and growth indicators already part of the ranking system.
- Equity Model - An equity model examines the subgroup's size compared with the percentage of the students achieving proficiency. This comparison is based on the premise that the representation of the group in any program, practice, or outcome should mirror the representation of the group in the general population. Significant variations between the two provide an indicator that there may be other factors limiting or exaggerating the subgroup's presence in the program, practice or outcome. In the context of achievement, equity is considered to be present if the representation among proficient students for the subgroup is similar to the general population representation.
- Gap Index Model - A gap index model was reviewed that summed the gaps between the achievement of each subgroup and the total population achievement. This model reduces the large number of possible gaps to a single index, but the resulting values are affected by the number of viable subgroups in different settings (more subgroups with at least 10 students results in more gaps calculated, thus a larger gap score). The unit of analysis in this model is the change in the gap score across years, based on the desire to reduce gaps.

The recommended gap measure consists of elements of several of the options described above. A single group consisting of the students who are identified as one or more of IEP, ELL, and FRL will be evaluated. The team determined that inclusion of ethnic/racial variables in this grouping was not advisable at the statewide level, due to the high variability across school settings, the overlap of large portions of some ethnic/racial groups with variables such as FRL and ELL, and other definitional problems. The equity model calculation was determined to be a more stable and equitable comparison than either the traditional model or the growth tracking model. Thus, the percent of the single supergroup in the general population will be compared to the percent of that supergroup's representation among the proficient students. Finally, the use of a gap change score from the gap index model was applied to match the requirement to rank schools based on their reduction of gaps. The application of a change score also has the advantage of improving the equity across schools because each site is evaluated based on their own change.

	2012 group population	2012 group proficient	2012 gap	2013 group population	2013 group proficient	2013 gap	Change score*	Result
School A	77.7%	64.9%	-12.8%	76.5%	66.7%	-9.8%	Decrease 3%	Less gap
School B	9.0%	6.5%	-2.5%	9.0%	7.0%	-2.0%	Decrease 0.5%	Less gap
School C	16.7%	14.7%	-2.0%	14.4%	11.7%	-2.7%	Increase 0.7%	More gap
School D	44.4%	37.6%	-6.8%	45.9%	35.4%	-10.5%	Increase 3.7%	More gap

\* Change score = 2013 gap minus 2012 gap

Extremely small schools that do not have at least 10 students in the aggregated gap index group will likely be excluded from this calculation. One potential problem with this analysis is that schools with proportionally smaller gap index groups and smaller gaps have less potential for change, relative to schools with proportionally large gap index groups and large gaps.

## College-Readiness Rates

College readiness can be represented in the ACR system by using data from the Iowa Assessments and aligning to ACT assessment scores, which predict success in college. For this purpose, college-ready means the acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing first-year courses at a postsecondary institution without the need for remediation. The following cut scores on the ACT are considered to represent college readiness: Reading – 22 and Mathematics – 22.

The ACR work group proposes to use 11<sup>th</sup> grade Iowa Assessments National Scale Scores (NSS) that translate to college readiness scores on the ACT as found in the Iowa Testing Programs study, *Establishing Validity Evidence to Assess College Readiness through a Vertical Scale* (Furgol, et. al. 2011). Middle/junior high schools will include the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Iowa Assessment NSSs that translate to college readiness scores. Scores on individual Iowa Assessments have been mapped to the above targets of readiness on the ACT test and can be linked for grades 5-11 (Furgol, Fina, & Welch, 2011).

Please note that over the next year, the ACR work group will also explore other indicators of post-secondary success. This indicator will be impacted by any change that might occur in the assessment framework in Iowa.

## Additional Optional Indicators

The ACR legislation includes both a set of required indicators as well as a series of optional indicators for the Department to consider in designing a school ranking system. Optional indicators include: 1) post-graduation data, 2) suspension and expulsion rates, 3) level of student engagement, 4) parent satisfaction, 5) parent engagement, and 6) staff working conditions. The legislation also provided the Department some flexibility to include other indicators not outlined in the bill that would be important in an Iowa ACR system.

The work team spent time discussing and reviewing these optional metrics. The committee recommends to not include any additional or optional indicators at this time that are not specifically required by the ACR legislation. Over the next year, the ACR work group will meet with extended membership to include AEA and school district representation. This group will have several charges:

- Consider inclusion of any optional indicators above
- Consider inclusion of other indicators such as those that support an MTSS framework, preschool indicators, additional indicators of post-secondary success, and any other indicators that will support the use of data to drive continuous improvement
- Decide how all of the indicators represented in this report will combine to derive one ACR score for each attendance center
- Recommend reporting for schools, districts, AEA, state, and public reports

## Timeline

Dates	Work Completed/Deliverable
May 2013 – June 2014	Department ACR work group and vetting group to meet, review indicators, pinpoint existing collections and measures to be included in a prototype.
July 2014	Report issued by Department to Legislature.
August 2014 – January 2015	Department ACR work group, along with AEA and school district representatives, design reporting system, calculate data and build prototype. Work dependent on resources.
October 2014 – June 2015	Work with the Department's school improvement consultants and the Continuous Improvement team to plan for data use and technical assistance and supports in tiered accreditation. Release the growth and proficiency components of the system.
June 2015 – August 2015	Provide professional development to district staff in the new Accreditation and School Improvement process in which ACR is a central data source.
September 2015	Release ACR system data and scores to districts.
October 2015	Release ACR system data and scores to public.

## Conclusion

The Attendance Center Ranking (ACR) requirements were established by House File (HF) 215 of the 2013 legislative session. Section 73 of HF 215 required the Iowa Department of Education to develop a school performance system and report card for all attendance centers. The goal of this legislation is to establish specific performance goals and evaluate the effectiveness of each attendance center toward meeting these outcomes.

The Department of Education commissioned a work group and vetting group that have been working since May 2013 on the ACR system. Members of these groups felt it was important that the ACR system have some key characteristics. To be effective and drive improvement, the ACR system must be built on a framework that combines accountability and improvement to be successful. The system also must:

- Contain data and calculations that are both transparent and easily understandable by all education stakeholder groups (school districts, AEAs, parents, general public).
- Includes considerations for celebrating successes and providing professional development and technical assistance to districts and schools based on their needs.
- Be collaboratively created with school districts, AEAs, and other stakeholders.

This report contains information on recommendations for how to measure all of the legislatively required indicators for the ACR system. The Department, along with school districts and AEAs, will use the next year to refine the calculations, consider additional indicators, and combine all the indicators into rankings. We will also work with the continuous improvement work group to integrate the ACR system into the continuous improvement process and differentiated accountability in fall 2015.

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## Appendix A: ACR Indicators

Must include in ACR		
Indicators	Current Data Source	Considerations
Student proficiency	Iowa Assessment Data PK-Gold Assessment Data	Not all grades are tested. No consistent K-2 measures for all districts.
Student academic growth	Iowa Assessment Data	Work teams have reviewed multiple potential models, including: College Readiness, ITP growth model, value-added model. No funding exists for procuring a VAM. The Department's senior staff has approved using a mixed model that includes growth toward college readiness.
Attendance Rates	Student Reporting in Iowa collection	The potential for districts to choose calendars based on 1,080 hours or 180 days could impact the collection and reporting of this indicator.
Parent Involvement	No current data source exists for all schools. Data are gathered for the high schools that participate through the Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools grant.	Added collection and reporting burden for districts. Additional Department resources are needed. Several national models exist which provide schools valuable and actionable information.
Employee turnover	Basic Education Data Survey Staff	None
Community activities and involvement	No current data source exists for all schools. Data are gathered for the high schools that participate through the Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools grant.	Added collection and reporting burden for districts. Additional Department resources are needed.

Closing gap score for subgroup performance	Iowa Assessment Data	None
College-readiness rates	Iowa Assessment Data ACT data	None
<b>May include in ACR</b>		
Post-graduation data	State Longitudinal Data System links between K-12 and higher education	This project is still in the development stage, so the data can be leveraged when it is operational.
Suspension and expulsion rates	Student Reporting in Iowa collection	None
Level of student engagement	No current data source exists	Added collection and reporting burden for districts. Additional Department resources are needed. Several national models exist which provide schools valuable and actionable information.
Parent satisfaction	No current data source exists for all schools. Data are gathered for the high schools that participate through the Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools grant.	Added collection and reporting burden for districts. Additional Department resources are needed. Several national models exist which provide schools valuable and actionable information.
Parent engagement	No current data source exists for all schools. Data are gathered for the high schools that participate through the Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools grant.	Added collection and reporting burden for districts. Additional Department resources are needed.
Staff working conditions	No current data source exists	Added collection and reporting burden for districts. Additional Department resources are needed.

## Appendix B: Parent Involvement Survey

### Demographics

What is your gender?	Female, Male
What is your race/ethnicity? (Please fill in the circle for the category that best describes you.)	American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Latino/Latina/Hispanic, White/Caucasian, Multiracial, Not Listed Above
What is your position?	Teacher, Administrator, Other Professional Staff, Paraprofessional, Noncertified Support Staff (e.g., security officer, cafeteria worker, bus driver, custodian, etc.)
What grade(s) do you work with? (Please select all that apply)	List out PK-12
How many years have you been working in schools in this position?	1 <sup>st</sup> year, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, 20+ years
How many years have you been working in this school in this position?	1 <sup>st</sup> year, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, 20+ years

### Beliefs About Family Involvement

All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Every family has some strengths that can be tapped to increase student success in the classroom.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
All parents could learn ways to help their children with schoolwork at home, if shown.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Parents and school staff should be equal partners in their children's learning.	Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
The responsibility for building partnerships between school and	Strongly Agree, Agree,

home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders	Disagree, Strongly Disagree
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### Communication with Families

How often do you contact every student's parent by phone, mail or e-mail?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you send a classroom newsletter or bulletin to your students' parents?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you post updated grades/assignments on the online grading system/parent portal?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you update information about your classroom on the school's website or your own website?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you attend parent/teacher meetings and other family events at your school?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
For parents who do not speak English, how often are written materials translated into their home language?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
For parents who do not speak English, how often are interpreters available (verbal communications)?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never

### Welcoming Family Input / Beginning Role Construction

How often do you elicit information from parents about their students' learning styles?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you elicit information from parents about their students' strengths, talents, interests, and needs?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you survey parents to know what their talents are?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you survey parents to know how they would like to be involved in your classroom?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you involve parents in decisions about their students' education?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you invite parents to ask questions and express concerns?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never

### Empowering Families to Support their Child's Learning

How often do you offer opportunities (e.g. information sessions, workshops, individual meetings) to help parents understand what their students are learning?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you offer opportunities (e.g. information sessions, workshops, individual meetings) to help parents use and understand your online grading system/parent portal?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you offer resources (verbal/written or on website) to help parents support their student with classroom standards, learning objectives, and activities?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you invite parents to visit or volunteer in your classroom?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you invite parents to assist with learning projects in your classroom?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never

### Providing Information to Families

How often do you provide parents with curriculum updates for your class that include student activities and due dates?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you provide parents with updates on academic standards their students should meet and how well their students are doing in relation to the academic standards?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you send student work home for parent review and comment?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you keep parents informed about any problems their students are having in the classroom?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you let parents know when their students show improvement or do something well?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never
How often do you refer or connect families to support services?	Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely/Never